



87: Someday by **cali-chan**

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Summary: Over her shoulder he saw the bride and groom dance and laugh together just a few feet away, and the awe hit him all over again, that he could see himself and El being just like that... someday. PG-13, romance/fluff, Mike/Eleven, post-S2.

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Over her shoulder he saw the bride and groom dance and laugh together just a few feet away, and the awe hit him all over again, that he could see himself and El being just like that... someday.

Note: This one's for iAmCC on FFN, who a while back mentioned the idea of El attending a wedding for the first time, and I thought it was an interesting concept. Although there's not much actual *wedding* here, admittedly, but it is what it is. :P So. Henceforth, my (slightly belated?) contribution to the unofficial *Stranger Things* wedding week. I am now fully convinced that this fandom is a hive mind. Really.

It was rare those days that there was any "mundane" thing Eleven had yet to experience. Sure, the "big" things they were still working on—she wanted to fly on a plane, she wanted to see the ocean, and she also wanted, much to Mike's eternal befuddlement, to go on a safari — but generally speaking, when it came to the day-to-day stuff, very little was new to her by that point in her life.

So it was a treat for both of them, really, to share the experience of El's first wedding ceremony. Oh, she'd seen people get married before, but that had been a smaller experience: a quick trip to the courthouse followed by a slightly-larger-than-usual family dinner to celebrate. This was the first full-throated wedding *ceremony* she'd been a part of, with fancy dresses and suits, walking down the aisle, a giant white cake and a big party after. It was El's first time experiencing all of that, and Mike was enjoying watching her enjoy it more than he thought he would.

He'd never been a big fan of weddings. His parents had dragged him to too many of these events throughout his childhood, for extended family and work colleagues alike, and while Nancy had always gotten swept up in the romance of it all, Mike just found them really boring,

not to mention highly annoying when some distant great aunt insisted on pinching his cheeks because he'd grown up so much since the last time she'd seen him like a decade previous.

This particular wedding was a lot less of a stuffy affair than most weddings from his childhood had been, though. Mr. Clarke and his now-wife had gotten permission from the city to have their wedding at a local park, holding the ceremony in the open pavilion near the creek, and then spreading out among the spring greenery of the park for the reception. The bulk of the guests were friends and family, but the event was also open for people from town to come and go as they pleased without an invitation, which made things feel a lot more relaxed.

Plus, this time he wasn't forced to come by his parents; instead, he was there by choice with his friends, and that made everything much more entertaining. And having El by his side and seeing her witness everything with wide eyes was a treat in and of itself. It had been a while since he saw that look of wonder on her face—the one that made him think back to breathless giggling on his father's La-Z-Boy—and it made his heart feel lighter to see it again.

After everybody ate and the bride and groom swayed to "We Can Last Forever" as their first official dance as a married couple, the six of them retreated to one of the benches on the edges of the park area, which had been left unoccupied after people started dancing, a large group in the pavilion and several smaller groups out in the grass, among the wildflowers. Mike, El, and Will sat on the bench facing the dancers, while the other three stood in front of them, Dustin and Max arguing about the merits of Paula Abdul vs Janet Jackson, while Lucas interjected every once in a while about Bobby Brown. That only got him relentlessly teased about New Edition, at least until he decided not to take it anymore.

"Whatever, you people don't know anything about good music," he declared with a scoff, and several of the others looked like they were about to protest, so he continued speaking before they could. "I'm gonna go see if I can sneak some beer." He turned on his heel and started in the direction of the bar.

"Ooh, I'll come with," Dustin offered, but Lucas stopped him right in

his tracks with a hand gesture.

"Uh, no, you won't," he sentenced, eyebrows lifting high on his forehead. "You'll get us caught."

"No, I won't!" Dustin retorted in an affronted tone.

"Yes, you will," Lucas reiterated with a shake of his head. "How many times have we gotten in trouble because you can't keep out of sight? You couldn't be stealthy if you tried." He glared at his curly-haired friend. "Just stay here, okay? I don't need any backup."

"Fine," Dustin replied with a scoff of his own. "*I'm* going back to the buffet table, and I won't bring you back anything," he added with a shrug, as if hastily brushing off a crippling rejection. Mike rolled his eyes. His friends were such drama queens.

"I didn't even want more food anyway!" Lucas threw back over his shoulder as he marched toward the drinks area, ignoring Dustin's pout.

Will leaned forward where he was sitting. "You do know that we live with the chief of police, right?" he called out to Lucas as Dustin shook his head and started in the opposite direction, heading toward the buffet table.

While true, Will's protest was halfhearted. Mike knew well that he said it because he felt someone had to. Will only joined in once in a while, but he never objected when his friends drank, and when they did manage to procure booze in situations like these, they always ended up having to share one or two cans of beer between five or six of them, so it's not like anyone was getting drunk enough for any adults to notice. They just liked to cut loose every once in a while, enjoy the tiniest bit of teenage rebellion while they could.

The familiar opening chords of The Bangles came up just then over the loudspeakers, and Max suddenly turned to the three of them like Christmas had come early. "I love this song! Come on, Willie boy, let's dance." Without giving him much of a choice, she pulled Will to his feet and toward the pavilion, leaving Mike and El alone for once in the afternoon.

Mike nudged Eleven with his shoulder. "Do you want to dance?"

She stared at him in a contemplative manner for a minute before crinkling her nose ever-so-slightly. "Maybe when a slow song comes on," she suggested instead with a shake of her head.

He narrowed his eyes at her. "Is that a commentary on my dancing skills?" *Or lack thereof*, was an addendum he thought but didn't say.

Her eyes widened and she pursed her lips tightly for a moment before saying "...No?" with an inflection that made it sound more like a question than a firm answer. He gave her a flat stare and it made her burst into laughter. "Sorry."

He shook his head. "You're just lucky I happen to have a teeny tiny soft spot for you," he said mock-grumpily as he threw an arm around her shoulders and pulled her to him. She was still laughing as she rested her head against his shoulder. "So, what did you think of your very first wedding?"

She exhaled heavily as her mirth died down little by little. "It was nice... There were no doves, though."

Huh? To say that non sequitur caught him unawares would be an understatement. "Doves?" he asked, looking down at her with what he was sure was nothing short of utter befuddlement on his face.

She lifted up her head to meet his gaze, looking a little worried, like she still did sometimes when she feared she'd unwittingly said something wrong. "Yes. Like on television?" she explained hesitantly, and that's when it clicked for Mike.

His girlfriend and her obsession with *Days of Our Lives*. Of course. He chuckled and saw her relax when she realized it wasn't a big deal. "Well, you know some things are not the way they look on television," he half-shrugged.

She reclined back against him, one of her hands moving up to twine her fingers with his where they rested on her shoulder. "I know," she admitted as she got comfortable, "but I really think weddings should have doves."

He rested his cheek against her hair, inhaling the sweet scent of her perfume combined with the smell of spring all around them. It was so nice, just sitting here with her like this, away from any problems, surrounded by happiness. Perhaps that's why he didn't notice what he said next.

"Maybe when we get married we can get some..."

It only took a second after the words came out of his mouth for them to register in his mind, and he couldn't help but go stiff as a board, afraid he'd jumped the gun. *Way to go, you spazz*, he mentally kicked himself. "I mean..." he started, trying to come up with *something* to say that wouldn't make him sound like a complete dweeb, and feeling like he was failing miserably. "Sorry. I, um— I-I didn't mean to assume..."

If he was freaking out on the inside, his girlfriend looked as cool as a cucumber. "Mike," she cut through his nervous babbling in that quiet way of hers. "You're allowed to assume." She pulled his arm back around her shoulder from where he'd pulled it back by reflex, and cuddled closer to him, throwing a lazy arm around his waist.

His spine started loosening up when he heard those words, but at the same time his heartbeat started speeding up. "Really?" he asked, almost breathless. Because if she was okay with him making that assumption, that meant... "So you think we're going to get married someday?"

She looked up at him— now that she had kicked off her shoes, pulled her legs up onto the bench and turned just slightly sideways, the angle was easier— her beautiful eyes shining in the afternoon light. "Someday," she agreed with a contented sigh, her breath tickling his neck. Then she chuckled. "Unless you meant that to be a proposal. I bet my dad would *love* that."

Just the mere *idea* of having to stand face to face with Hopper and ask for his blessing to marry his daughter had him throwing his head back with a groan of pure suffering. "Maybe we should just elope?" he threw out, just in case she happened to agree with his idea. Hey, that worked sometimes.

It didn't work this time, though. "Nope, I want doves," El retorted, but he could tell from her mischievous smile that she was mostly joking. He'd been joking, too, about the elopement thing. Well, kind of.

He chuckled, shaking his head. "How many doves?" he had to ask, because these were important details, probably.

El shrugged. "At least two," she responded in a matter-of-fact, *well-it-only-makes-sense* tone, but she was still smiling like the cat that ate the canary. He loved seeing her smile like that, with a spark in her eye.

He tightened his hold on her and kissed the top of her head before resting his cheek against the spot he had just kissed. "Hmm. We'll have to find a pair of doves, then..." he murmured, just enjoying the closeness for a second, and basking in the significance of the conversation they just shared, flying creatures notwithstanding.

Things were always so easy with El, he marveled. Actually, no, things weren't *always* easy— they'd had their fair share of arguments and disagreements over the years— but he felt that, in terms of the ultimate goal, they were always on the same wavelength, and that goal was being together, no matter what.

Mike loved her, and he was *always* going to love her, and he wanted her to be in his life for as long as that was an option. Whether that meant making plans together for college, work or, well, *marriage* now, he figured, it wasn't something that required a lot of thought on his part. They were just things he knew with full certainty were eventually going to happen, even those they hadn't actually talked about before.

And it was exhilarating to know that she felt the same way, even if people looking in from the outside probably wouldn't *get* it. No, scratch that, they *definitely* wouldn't get it, and honestly, he could see why. "Should this feel weird?" he mused out loud. "Talking about marriage at eighteen, I mean. Shouldn't we be freaking out and totally avoiding this topic?"

El's initial response was a sigh. "Maybe," she conceded, nuzzling his neck with the tip of her nose. "But we've never been normal."

He chuckled. "That's true." Because what about their relationship had ever been normal? After dealing with superpowers, interdimensional monsters, and shadowy government conspiracies, you'd think navigating the societal expectations of a romantic relationship would be the least controversial issue they'd have to deal with.

It wasn't, but it didn't matter. As long as they were together, they'd deal with everything else as it came.

"Hey," he said, turning his head so he could return her nuzzles, trying to get her to look at him. When her gaze finally met his, he smiled. "I love you."

"I love you, too," she responded right away, with a bright smile of her own, before moving up to press her lips against his. His body responded almost automatically, leaning forward to press more firmly against her, deepening the kiss.

The hand that was on his side lifted to caress his neck, the soft hair at his nape which she knew never failed to drive him crazy in the best possible way, and down to the collar of his shirt, feathering over the skin around his collarbone that was exposed by his loosened tie and a couple of undone buttons.

He moved his arm that wasn't already around her to hold her by the waist, his hand tracing the curve of her torso down to her hip and up and down again, the fabric of her dress soft under his fingers and so thin that he could feel the heat of her, making him wish very, *very* much that they weren't in public right then.

She let out a sound that he could only describe as a mewl from the back of her throat, and if his mind wasn't already clouded by a haze of desire, that would've been enough to do the trick. Fortunately (or unfortunately?) for him, the whole "being in public" thing was a real issue, as they learned a second later when a sarcastic voice broke them out of the moment.

"Hey, hey, now," Max interrupted them perhaps a little *too* gleefully. "*That* is the bride and groom's prerogative today."

They broke apart abruptly to find their redheaded friend standing in

front of the bench, smirking, hands at her hips. It took Mike a minute to catch his breath— both from the making out and from the scare—but once he managed, he glared at her. "Haven't you ever heard the phrase 'Love is in the air,' Maxine?"

Max scoffed. "Love is *always* in the air with you two," she retorted, shaking her head. "Seriously, you guys need to just get it on already so the rest of us don't end up suffocating in all this unresolved sexual tension."

Mike just rolled his eyes as he usually did when any of their friends started with that litany, but El couldn't stop herself from giggling. Max immediately narrowed her eyes at them. "What's so funny?" she asked El, sounding suspicious. For one brief second, he thought she would figure them out.

His girlfriend, thankfully, shook her head quickly enough. "Nothing," she said, and although Max did stare at them skeptically for a second longer, she eventually let it go. "Where'd you dump Will?" El asked, eager to change the topic.

"I didn't dump Will," Max waved the question off with one hand, "the bride recruited us to go tell people she's about to throw the bouquet. So Will's around somewhere." She gestured vaguely at... the entire park, basically. "Meanwhile, I came to get you because if I'm going to be forced into this, then you're doing it, too. Come on." She stretched a hand out for Eleven to take.

"Throw the bouquet?" El asked as Max pulled her to her feet and gave her time to put her shoes on. "I've seen that on TV, but I don't know what it's for," she added, turning to Mike with an adorably confused expression, like she usually did when there was something she didn't understand.

"It's just a dumb wedding tradition," Max intervened with a shake of her head. Clearly, she didn't think much of such traditions, though you could never be sure with Max— sometimes she'd swear up and down that she thought something was dumb or annoying, but it turned out that she secretly really enjoyed it. She liked to be contrary that way, which the boys often complained about. Mike was just glad she hadn't heard the conversation they'd just had before she arrived,

because God knew what kind of *opinions* she would have about it.

"The woman who catches the bouquet is supposed to be the next one to get married," Mike added from where he was still sitting on the bench, trying to be a bit more helpful with his answer than Max had been.

"Oh, like a superstition?" El asked, pronouncing the last word carefully even now. Mike had to smile, because he remembered she learned that word back in ninth grade, when they had to stage an intervention for Dustin because he insisted the t-shirt he wore when he finally beat Max's Dig Dug score was his "lucky" shirt and therefore he had to wear it whenever he went to the arcade. After going unwashed for a year, it stank like sweaty feet, and everybody was refusing to go to the arcade with Dustin unless he gave up on the idea.

Thankfully *this* superstition was not nearly as smelly and probably more fun than that one had been. "That sounds interesting," El said in a contemplative manner, turning toward the pavilion to see the women starting to group.

Max slapped her arm lightly. "You can't use your powers to grab the bouquet," she warned, giving Mike's girlfriend a side-eye glance.

El shook her head. "I won't use my powers to grab the bouquet," she acquiesced, rolling her eyes a bit. Mike knew she found it funny that their friends always warned her not to use her powers to cheat at stuff. (Unless it was convenient for them, of course— those hypocrites.)

Max stared at her for a minute longer, as if gauging the sincerity of her response, before shrugging. "All right. Come on, let's get this over with." She pulled Eleven by the arm. "Wish us the opposite of luck, Wheeler!" El could only wave at him as she was dragged toward the pavilion, a gesture Mike returned with a chuckle.

He kept his eyes on the group of women gathered for the wedding ritual who were clapping and cheering as the maid of honor handed the bride her bouquet and then rushed to join the larger group. El and Max were at the back of the group, purposefully choosing to

stand where the bouquet was not likely to end up. He leaned back in his seat, stretching his legs in front of him and crossing them at the ankles as the bride tried a couple of "practice" throws.

Finally she started counting down from three—the crowd around them joined in excitedly—and with a big swing let the bouquet fly behind her. The group of women went crazy trying to grab it from the air. From that angle, Mike could see the trajectory of the throw, and it looked like the bouquet was going to land maybe three-quarters of the way toward the back, a few paces in front of El and Max, where some of the other female guests would scramble for it.

The bundle of flowers hit the high point of its parabolic trajectory and started its downward trek when, just barely out of reach of a tall, twenty-something-looking woman in a blue dress and an Alyssa-Milano-on-*Who's-The-Boss?* hairdo, it was suddenly pulled straight back by some unseen force...

...and landed squarely in Max's hands.

For a second Mike's heart stopped, as it usually did when he realized Eleven was using her powers in public, frantically worried that someone might notice. Just as quickly, though, he realized that no one had; the women around them had been in such a tizzy to catch the bouquet that they lost track of it among the flurry of hands and teased hair. He heard the tall woman declare loudly that she must've knocked it back while trying to reach for it. El seemed to be in the clear.

Unless Max killed her, that is. As several women, including the bride, came over to "congratulate her" for catching the bouquet, the redhead could only glare at his girlfriend, who in turn seemed to be trying very hard not to laugh. Just after Max handed the bouquet back to the maid of honor he saw her point accusingly at El and say something. He wasn't sure what she was saying, but whatever it was, it broke El's control and she burst out into laughter, at which point Max just rolled her eyes and threw her hands in the air, as if resigning herself to what just happened.

As the bouquet-catching group started to disperse, Mike heard someone calling his name. It was Lucas, standing off to the side,

carrying two cups of what he assumed was beer. Dustin was standing to one side of him, holding a disposable plate topped with what looked like finger food and munching on something Mike couldn't see from that distance, while Will stood at Lucas's opposite side, hands in his pockets as his gaze wandered around the area.

Lucas lifted the two red cups and signaled with his head for Mike to join them over at the edge of the park. Mike gave him a thumbs up in reply and signaled toward the pavilion, trying to let them know without words that he'd go tell Max and El before joining them. Lucas seemed to get the idea.

The girls were already making their way in his direction when he stood up from the bench and started walking, Max in the lead and seemingly still huffing, and El trailing behind, still grinning with amusement. "Did you see what she just did?!" Max complained loudly when she reached his side.

"I have no idea what you're talking about," Mike replied with a smirk, which prompted El to start giggling again and Max to glare at him, arms crossed. "Lucas got the stuff. He and the guys are over there, waiting for us," he added, signaling toward where he'd last seen them.

"Perfect," Max declared dramatically, like he'd just told her she won the lottery. "I'm gonna need alcohol after that stunt your girlfriend just pulled." With that last comment she stomped away in the direction he'd just pointed, leaving him and El standing there to share a complicit laugh.

He took her hand and raised it to his lips, kissing her knuckles delicately. "Come on, they're waiting for us."

He tugged her in the direction Max had just left, but she planted her feet firmly. "They can wait a little longer." At his questioning look, she started pulling him toward the pavilion instead. "Let's dance?" she asked softly.

It was only then that he realized the DJ was playing a Debbie Gibson song he couldn't remember the name of, but he knew it was one of El's recent favorites. She was looking at him expectantly, with a

sweet smile, and of course he wasn't going to say no.

She led him by the hand into the pavilion and once they were in the middle of the floor, with a handful of other couples dancing around them, he pulled her to him, the heat of her body flush against his as they swayed gently to the rhythm. Over her shoulder he saw the bride and groom dance and laugh together just a few feet away, and the awe hit him all over again, that he could see himself and El being just like that... someday.

Married. Making a life together, forever. It was the ultimate promise.

He ducked his head slightly so he could rest his forehead against hers, like he had when they first shared a moment like this, so many years ago. Her smiling lips started to move as she whispered the lyrics to him, the soft, dulcet tone of her voice lulling his heart into a serene beat.

Like pulled by a magnet, he brushed his lips against her for a second before pulling her closer, her cheek brushing against his as they danced. The harmonies of the song resumed, murmured right into his ear. He closed his eyes and basked in the feeling of having the woman he loved in his arms.

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Notes: In case anyone's wondering what the park where the wedding takes place looks like, picture the park where Nancy and Jonathan get ambushed by the lab people in season 2, but in the spring.

The best part about writing *Stranger Things* fanfiction is looking up 80s music to use in my stories. On that topic:

- The song Mr. Clarke and his wife danced to for their first dance is "We Can Last Forever" by Chicago
- The song Max and Will dance to is "In Your Room" by The Bangles
- The song Mike and El dance to is "Lost in Your Eyes" by Debbie Gibson

All the songs listed above were released in late 1988/early 1989. *Days of Our Lives* is a daytime soap opera that has been airing on NBC since 1965, making it one of the longest-running TV shows of all time. *Who's the Boss?* was a sitcom starring Tony Danza, Judith Light, and the aforementioned Alyssa Milano, which aired on ABC from 1984 to 1992.